



# Miss that Tree!

Before tackling the problems of how to fly, Orville and Wilbur had been bicycle enthusiasts. The Wrights knew that a cyclist has to lean into high-speed turns. That same tilting movement in a flying machine is called banking. Here at Huffman Prairie Flying Field, the Wrights taught themselves how to bank their airship to make turns.

Mastery of banked turns — combining rudder moves with wing warping — was one of their most important steps toward developing what the brothers called *a machine of practical utility*.

An unexpected gust of wind and a thorn-laden tree, like the ones you see far ahead in this field, helped Orville Wright figure out how best to handle his controls to turn his flying machine.



*In one flight in 1905, while circling around a honey locust tree at a height at about 50 feet, the machine suddenly began to turn up on one wing, and took a course toward the tree.... not relishing the idea of landing in a thorn tree, [I] attempted to reach the ground. The left wing, however, struck the tree... and carried away several branches.*

Orville Wright

